



Vandenberg Air Force Base Installation Restoration Program Site 16 – No Contamination Found



Vandenberg Air Force Base, California

November 2000

Installation Restoration Program

BACKGROUND

Installation Restoration Program (IRP) Site 16 is located approximately 525 feet southwest of the junction between Mod Road and Umbra Road, on north Vandenberg Air Force Base (AFB). The site covers approximately 51 acres and includes Mod III Lake and vegetated sand dunes surrounding the lake. Before becoming part of Vandenberg AFB, this site was used by Marshallia Ranch for agricultural purposes such as cattle ranching.



Site 16 with Mod III lake ABRES-B Launch Complex shown in the background.

The IRP is a DoD program that was established to identify and clean up environmental contamination from spills or disposals of fuels, oils, solvents, and other substances resulting from past military operations.

Since the 1960s, military personnel have occasionally used Mod III Lake for recreational purposes such as fishing and picnicking. Nearby IRP Sites 15 (Advanced Ballistic Re-Entry System-B Launch Complex) and 34 (Missile Launcher 576-F) are approximately 200 feet northwest and 1,700 feet north, respectively of IRP Site 16. Mod III Lake was named for the MOD III guidance system employed for Atlas missile launches at Site 15. Site 16 was identified as an IRP site in the late 1980s because the lake was a suspected recipient of launch wastewater from IRP Site 15. Subsequently, fishing was banned at the lake.

CURRENT STATUS

Vandenberg AFB proceeded with a remedial investigation (RI) of Site 16 based on previous findings. The RI included review of historical records, photographic analysis, and sediment, soil, surface water, and groundwater sampling. In addition, preliminary human health and ecological risk assessments were performed for Site 16.

Review of photographs, topographic maps, and site reconnaissance indicated that surface drainage from Sites 15 and 34 did not lead to Mod III Lake as previously reported. Therefore, Mod III Lake was not a recipient of ABRES-B launch wastewater. In addition, no sources of contamination such as underground storage tanks or former tank sites were identified. The concentration of metals, petroleum hydrocarbons, and semivolatile organic compounds detected in environmental samples were below levels of concern and considered naturally occurring. For example, the diesel range compounds detected in the soils and sediments did not match a diesel chromatogram pattern. This observation, coupled with the lack of sources for fuel contamination, the organic-rich nature of lake sediment, and documented presence of naturally occurring bitumens in site bedrock indicates that compounds detected at Site 16 are naturally occurring. Since there was a lack of contamination source at Site 16, no exposure pathways were found. Therefore, the site does not pose a risk to human health or the environment.

The RI was completed for Site 16 and indicates that no further environmental investigation is required. In January 2000, both the Department of Toxic Substances Control and the Regional Water Quality Control Board concurred with the no further action recommendation for Site 16 and the site investigation was officially closed.

FUTURE OF MOD III LAKE

Mod III Lake is still conducive to fishing and picnicking. Because the site has been officially closed, the base will once again allow the lake to be used for recreational purposes. For more information on Mod III Lake or the Vandenberg AFB IRP, please contact Mr. Ron MacLelland, 30 CES/CEVCR, at (805) 606-2071.



Once used for picnicking, Site 16 will be approved for recreational usage.

Installation Restoration Program
30 CES/CEVR
806 13th Street, Suite 116
Vandenberg Air Force Base, California 93437-5242